

Robert M. Ansell, Jr.



STAT

30 September 1975

Dear Sir:

General George Mather suggested I contact you for your comments and observations on his Army career, for inclusion in my book THE GENERALS AND THE ADMIRALS, a collection of biographies.

Your response to the enclosed questionnaire will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Ansell".

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ROBERT M. ANCELL, JR.

8 Oct 73

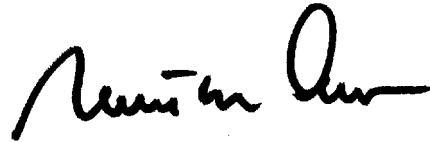
Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters, USA
The Deputy Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear General Walters,

Thank you very much for your letter of 29 August, which arrived while we were away in Colorado on a long overdue vacation. Please forgive this tremendously tardy reply.

I will certainly give you plenty of advance notice of my next trip to Washington, and look forward to the opportunity to meet and talk with you.

Most respectfully,



29 August 1973

Dear Mr. Ancell,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 8 August 1973 requesting an interview. I have no objection to meeting with you briefly with the understanding that we will not discuss my present assignment.

Please let me know when you expect to be in Washington so that we may set a time to get together.

Faithfully,

Vernon A. Walters
Lieutenant General, USA

Mr. Robert M. Ancell, Jr.

STAT

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ROBERT M. ANCELL, JR.

TELEPHONE

8 August 1973

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters, USA
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear General Walters,

Thank you for the biographical sketch, forwarded by Mr. Thuermer.

I plan to be in Washington in the next few months to continue interviews for my book. Would it be possible to meet and talk with you for an hour or so, provided of course we omit any reference to your present assignment?

It might interest you to know that I have already interviewed another former Deputy Director, Lieutenant General Marshall R. Carter, USA, Ret. At his request we did not talk about the CIA.

I look forward to hearing from you again, sir.

Most respectfully,

Robert M. An

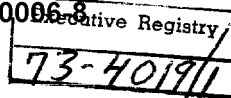
*Never
Miss note fully how I would
see him and to let he know
when he expects to be in Wash DC
so we can get together,
W*

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<p>I see no reason why Gail shouldn't see him -- maybe for lunch, even. It's not a news flash, it's a book. Here's full file. I can reply</p>			
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ROBERT M. ANCELL, JR.



TELEPHONE

[Redacted telephone number box]

8 August 1973

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Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

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I look forward to hearing from you again, sir.

Most respectfully,

TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 22 Aug 73
TO: Mr. Thuermer		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS:		
FYI & recommendation. Could you send us a copy of the reply you sent to Mr. Ancell.		
<i>Let me sample</i>		
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P-Ancell, Robert M.
(orig under Walters)

19 July 1973

STAT Mr. Robert M. Ancell, Jr.

Dear Mr. Ancell:

It is a pleasure to enclose a copy of the
curriculum vitae of Gen. Walters.

Sincerely,

/s/ Angus MacLean Thuermer
Angus MacLean Thuermer
Assistant to the Director

Enclosure

STAT

15 April 1973

Smith
I'll
dictate

Lieutenant General Vernon A. Walters, USA
c/o Army Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear General Walters,

I am in the information-gathering phase of writing a book which I have tentatively entitled THE GENERALS AND THE ADMIRALS. It is a collection of biographies of all notable three and four star general and flag officers over the past thirty years. I want to include you.

Would you please send me a current biographical sketch? Once I've had an opportunity to inspect it, may I send you a few questions about specific experiences?

I would not expect you to respond favorably without first checking my qualifications. As a starter, I enclose a copy of the most recent article I have written, plus a partial listing of the gentlemen who have assisted me in the past. In addition, please feel free to contact the Office of Information of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. They are familiar with my project.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Most respectfully,

Robert M. Ancell, Jr.

Robert M. Ancell, Jr.

Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz: Reflections at 80

By Lieutenant (j.g.) Robert M. Ancell, Jr.,
U. S. Naval Reserve, Public Affairs Officer,
U. S. Navy and Marine Corps Training Center,
Albuquerque, New Mexico



I rate Admiral Doenitz as the best of all of them, land or sea. He was unique in his handling of the German submarines and they were our most dangerous enemy. His performance with them—and he did most of it himself—was the most outstanding Axis performance of the war. Then he succeeded to command all German Navy Forces. It was too late for real accomplishment, but he made no mistakes and no one could have done better. Then he succeeded the Fuehrer himself, and his performance from there on seems to me to have been perfect. So I think Doenitz was the best.

That is quite an endorsement, considering it came from a highly respected American admiral, the late Thomas C. Hart. Yet, Admiral Hart is not the only Allied leader who has said approving things about Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz; there seems to be a general feeling among many retired U. S. flag officers that Admiral Doenitz was a professional, and that makes a great deal of difference.

The former commander of the German Navy during the latter part of World War II, and heir to a bankrupt Third Reich as the hand-picked successor to Adolf Hitler, lives quietly in Bavaria. Now 80, Doenitz has been retired since his release from Spandau Prison in 1956. He spends more time now in a health spa than ever before, but his health is good for his age.

Since his release from prison, where he spent ten years following conviction at Nuremberg* as a war criminal, Doenitz has kept very much to himself. He grants a few interviews, hardly ever discusses current affairs, and politely refuses to comment on anything more recent than the mid-1950s. He still talks about World War II, however, and

*See R. A. von Doenhoff, "Nuremberg in Perspective," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, this issue, pp. 101-107.

many of his views appear to have changed but little in three decades. The following is an interview between this author and Admiral Doenitz, handled completely by mail for more than a year. It was finalized late in 1972.

Admiral Doenitz, why did Germany continue to fight even though you knew there was no chance for victory?

We knew of the English operational order named "Eclipse," which maintained plans and preparations for the Allied occupation of Germany. It called for Germany to be split into four sections under the now-existing governments. We knew of American Treasury Secretary Morgenthau's plan which, after victory, would have destroyed Germany to make it pastureland and an agricultural nation. If his plan would have succeeded, millions of Germans would have starved. For reasons decided at the Casablanca Conference, the Allies would have made peace with Germany but only under the condition that we surrender completely. That would have meant that German troops would stay where they stood at that time, lay down their weapons, and become prisoners of the enemy. That would have been three-and-one-half million soldiers on the Eastern Front which, in 1944 and 1945, stood very far inside Russia, and it would have been impossible to provide these troops with food and shelter, even with the best organization.

Who wants to lay down voluntarily when your enemy tells you to do so, and surrender, otherwise he will cut you into four pieces and do with them as he pleases? These were the reasons why we did not surrender. The decision to ask for unconditional surrender at Casablanca was a political mistake.

Why did the leaders of Germany keep the truth from the people, and the troops—that the war was hopeless?

As long as Germany's armed forces still had to fight, one could not make it openly known that Germany's defeat was

imminent. Through such notice, the will to fight, by the armed forces, that still was necessary, would have lessened. For example, in the East, the German armed forces still had to hold ground to prevent the Russian advance, and to give Germany's population a chance to flee to the West and possibly reach the West themselves. This might have been Hitler's reason not to admit Germany's defeat for the last few weeks.

As head of the German Navy, the decision to prolong the sea end of the war, in 1945, was yours alone. Why did the Navy, and especially the U-boats, continue to fight up until the very end?

In 1939, the German Navy was sent to war against the strongest seapower in the world—Great Britain—unquestioning and unequipped. Up to the last hour, during the War, the German Navy fulfilled its duty, and more, despite its small numbers.

The submarines, especially, had one more sacrifice to make in 1945—to go on fighting even when the enemy was superior and with no effect on the enemy, but only losses. If the submarines had not made this one last sacrifice, the enemy would have had enormous power which they would have used to attack Germany. So the submarines were called in. Let me mention one example. The hundreds of English and American airplanes which flew patrols looking for submarines would have instead been loaded with bombs and sent to bomb German cities. Large numbers of women, children, and civilians would have lost their lives. That is why the submarines had to make this one last sacrifice, which won the highest appreciation.

For many months after the war began in Europe, Adolf Hitler paid little attention to the Navy. Why did he ignore the Navy for so long?

Like all German Austrians, Hitler was raised with a continental philosophy. He still had hopes of coming to some agree-

ment with England, but then, when he realized that the English did not want any agreement, he decided that the English would be ready to talk peace if he defeated the Russians. He also wanted victory on the European continent, but it could only come from the sea. Seapower could have been used, but he did not realize the strategic importance of seapower until 1943. After the defeat at Stalingrad, Hitler's strategy broke down, and it was too late for a turn in war leadership and to turn over the battle to the Navy and seapower.

Hitler replaced Grand Admiral Erich Raeder as commander of the Germany Navy, and gave the job to you. What was your opinion of Raeder, Admiral?

I would like to limit myself in my judgment of his relationship to the German Navy. Through the years, when the Grand Admiral was still commander-in-chief of the Navy, he trained the Navy in his style. That was to tighten comradeship and discipline.

How did you get along with Hitler?

I myself never thought about receiving presents or money from Hitler, so I did not let it bother me when I was not included when others got money and presents. For example, he only called me Herr Gross Admiral and never by any other name, such as my first name. I welcomed it that way.

What were your feelings about fighting in the war?

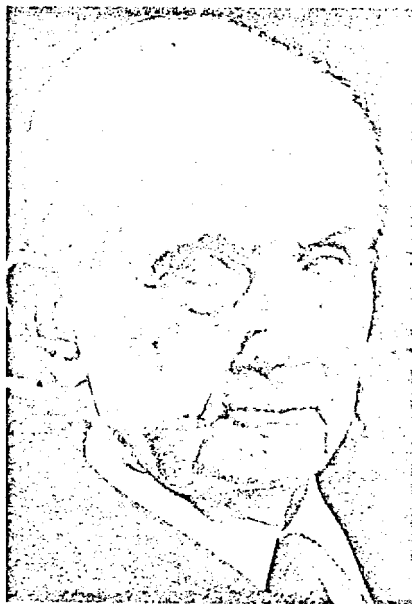
I made an effort not to draw the line between honor and duty. I only followed my conscience, did my duty, and tried not to damage my honor.

How did you get along with your men in the Navy?

My relationship with the officers and men of the Navy was very good. We knew and respected each other, and the men knew I respected them for their character, duty, and skill and not for their rank. We had a military-like relationship, which gave them the assurance that there were values higher than one's life, namely one's duty to protect the lives of your own people first. As for Hitler, he was, after all, the commander-in-chief, and he had the responsibility to lead Germany politically and militarily. It is the same in every Democratic state.

What instructions did you give to the Navy?

The main role of Germany's Navy was to attack the British sea routes, especially in the Atlantic. These sea routes were Great Britain's life line. Industry depended on these sea routes both in peace and war. It was up to Germany's Navy to sink as many enemy transports as possible. The submarine had to find all the possibilities to sink enemy transports under the strong defense they put up. There also was competition among the submarines as to the tonnage of transport ships which were sunk, including ships which were sent from Anglo-American shipyards. It was the German Navy's task to destroy Britain's population. However, the German Navy did not do what they, the English, did, by bombing Germany.



Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz

Admiral Doenitz, do you think the plot to kill Hitler could have succeeded under different circumstances?

This question is humanly impossible to answer, because no person can see with safety into the future, not even in politics. In the years 1943 and 1944, a huge part of Germany's population, including soldiers, stood behind Hitler. I don't know the motives of those men who, on 20 July 1944, tried to destroy Hitler's regime. If German men and women, after searching their conscience, believed it necessary to go the way of resistance, up to high treason and assault, then this was morally not wrong.

What did you think about the SS?

Himmler and his organization were the kind of men who went behind the back

of German people and, under strongest secrecy, and mostly in East Germany, they committed those gruesome crimes of destroying people.

What about Rommel? Did his reputation reach the Navy?

I didn't know what the talk was about Rommel, except his very well known exploits. I cannot say if these stories are true or not.

Admiral Doenitz, how do you look back on the Nuremberg Tribunal?

In my last three books I wrote after my release from Spandau, on 30 September 1956, I occupied myself with questions about the Nuremberg trials. The trials at Nuremberg should have depended upon fundamental rights, but they did not. Only German cases came to Nuremberg to be prosecuted. I hold myself not guilty. I went behind bars for political reasons. This is, of course, not just my opinion. One case I know of is Judge Francis Biddle, at that time judge in Nuremberg. He ruled for my acquittal.

How important was the letter from Admiral Nimitz, presented in your defense at Nuremberg?

The report Admiral Nimitz made to my defense at Nuremberg was very valuable to me, because he assured the court that a leader of the American Navy performed in the same manner as the Germans did. I have the highest respect for Admiral Nimitz and other American admirals.

What did you do while imprisoned at Spandau, Admiral Doenitz?

At Spandau, I kept very much to myself. I occupied myself spiritually and physically to overcome boredom, and tried not to keep company with too many other prisoners.

One last question, Admiral Doenitz. As you know, Albert Speer recently published his memoirs, and they were very popular. You and Speer are the only big names still alive in Germany. What is your personal assessment of Speer?

Speer was positively excellent in architecture and a talented organizer. His performance as Arms Minister was remarkable. We have not seen each other since my release from Spandau.

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THE FOLLOWING IS A PARTIAL LISTING OF THE OFFICERS WHO HAVE
ASSISTED ME WITH MY BOOK "THE GENERALS AND THE ADMIRALS"

LTG Royal Allison, USAF	ADM Harry W. Hill, USN
GEN Samuel E. Anderson, USAF	VADM Roscoe Hillenkoetter, USN
VADM Walter Anderson, USN	GEN John E. Hull, USA
LTG Henry S. Aurand, USA	VADM Tom Inglis
VADM Bernard Austin, USN	LTG Carl Jark, USA
VADM Walter Baumberger, USN	GEN Harold Johnson, USA
VADM Jerry Bogan, USN	LTG William K. Jones, USMC
LTG Richard Bohannon, USAF	GEN Robert M. Lee, USAF
LTG Donald P. Booth, USA	VADM Emory Land
ADM Areligh Burke, USN	LTG Richard C. Lindsay, USAF
LTG Marshall Carter, USA	LTG Eugene LeBailly, USAF
GEN Ben Chidlaw, USAF	LTG Leroy Lutes, USA
ADM Jocko Clark, USN	GEN Lyman Lemnitzer, USA
GEN Lucius D. Clay, USA	ADM John S. McCain, USN
GEN Orval Cook, USAF	LTG Thomas McGehee, USAF
LTG Edward A. Craig, USMC	GEN Joseph McNarney, USAF
VADM Ralph Davison, USN	ADM Harold Martin, USN
LTG Pedro DelValle, USMC	LTG Herman Nickerson, USMC
LTG William W. Dick, USA	LTG John Oakes, USA
GEN George Decker, USA	GEN Emmett O'Donnell, USAF
GEN Jacob Devers, USA	GEN Bruce Palmer, USA
GEN Clyde Eddleman, USA	GEN Charles D. Palmer, USA
LTG Charles W. Eifler, USA	GEN E.E. Partridge, USAF
LTG Hugh M. Elwood, USMC	LTG Willard Pearson, USA
LTG William P. Ennis, USA	ADM A.M. Pride, USN
VADM Paul Foster, USN	ADM Francis W. Rockwell, USN
LTG Alonzo Fox, USA	VADM George L. Russell, USN
GEN Paul Freeman, USA	VADM Walter Schindler, USN
LTG Hobart Gay, USA	LTG August Schomburg, USA
VADM Robert Goldthwaite, USN	VADM T.G.W. Settle, USN
VADM Robert M. Griffin, USN	GEN Lemuel Shepherd, USMC
LTG Francis H. Griswold, USAF	LTG Merwin Silverthorn, USMC
GEN Alfred Gruenther, USA	VADM Hewlett Thebaud, USN
GEN Paul Harkins, USA	GEN Gerald C. Thomas, USMC
ADM Kent Hewitt, USN	GEN Earle Wheeler, USA

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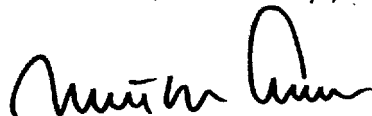
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Dear General Walters:

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taking the time to write about
General Mather.

Most respectfully,



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